Rhetorick Pamph. 6.

AN

ORATION,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,

Held in Philadelphia on the 27th of February, 1786;

CONTAINING

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE INFLUENCE OF PHYSICAL CAUSES UPON THE MORAL FACULTY.

By BENJAMIN RUSH, M. D.

AND PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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HUMAN KNOWLEDGE, under the preſent circumſtances of our Beings and Conſtitutions, may be carried much further than it has hitherto been, if men would employ all their induſtry, and labor of thought, in improving the means of diſcovering truth.

MORALITY is the ſcience, and buſineſs of mankind. LOCKE.

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M.DCC.LXXXVI.

G.R. III.

At a Meeting of the American Philoſophical Society, February 27th, 1786.

On motion, *Reſolved unanimouſly*, That the Thanks of the Society be given to Dr. Benjamin Ruſh, for his Oration, "On the Influence of Phyſical Cauſes on the Moral Faculty," delivered before the Society this Evening, and that the Secretaries be directed to requeſt the Doctor to furniſh them with a Copy of the ſaid Oration for Publication.

Extract from the Minutes,

JAMES HUTCHINSON, *Secretary.*

TO

HIS EXCELLENCY

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, Esq.

PRESIDENT

OF THE

SUPREME EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

OF

PENNSYLVANIA,

THE FRIEND AND BENEFACTOR

OF

MANKIND,

The following ORATION is respectfully inscribed,

BY HIS GRATEFUL FRIEND,

AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

MOST of the facts, together with the principles contained in the following Oration, were committed to paper above ſeven years ago.——If, they have the ſame operation upon the mind of the reader, that they had upon the mind of the author, they will at firſt be doubted——afterwards believed, and finally they will be propagated. He is ſo far from propoſing phyſical influence, as a ſubſtitute for religious, moral, or rational inſtruction, that he offers it only as a reinforcement to the

obligations

obligations of reaſon and religion; or rather, as a neglected part of Chriſtianity. He is ſenſible that in this new, and difficult enquiry, he has only performed the drudgery of a pioneer: Thoſe who come after him upon this ſubject, will find a way opened, for extenſive and uſeful obſervations, and will probably enjoy with more certainty, than the author, the fruits of their labors.

GENTLEMEN,

GENTLEMEN,

IT was for the laudable purpoſe of exciting a ſpirit of emulation and enquiry, among the members of our body, that the founders of our Society, inſtituted an annual oration. The taſk of preparing, and delivering this exerciſe, hath devolved, once more, upon me. I have ſubmitted to it,—not becauſe I thought myſelf capable of fulfilling your intentions, but becauſe I wiſhed, by a teſtimony of my obedience to your requeſts, to atone for my long abſence from the temple of ſcience.

THE ſubject upon which I am to have the honor of addreſſing you this evening, is "An enquiry into the influence of phyſical "cauſes upon the moral faculty."

By the moral faculty I mean a power in the human mind of diſtinguiſhing and chuſing good and evil; or, in other words, virtue and vice. It is a native principle, and though it is capable of improvement by experience and reflection, it is not derived from either of them.——St. Paul, and Cicero, give us the moſt perfect account of it that is to be found in modern or ancient authors. "For when the Gentiles, (ſays St. "Paul) which have not the law, do by na- "ture the things contained in the law, *theſe*, "having not the law, are a *law* unto them- "ſelves; which ſhew the works of the law "written in their hearts, their conſciences "alſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts "the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing "one another *."

The words of Cicero are as follow—— "Eſt igitur hæc, judices, non ſcripta, ſed "nata lex, quam non didicimus, accepi- "mus, legimus, verum ex natura ipſa arri- "puimus, hauſimus, expreſſimus, ad quam

* Rom. II. 14. 15.

"non

" non docti, ſed facti, non inſtituti, ſed im-
" buti ſumus †." This faculty is often confounded with conſcience, which is a diſtinct and independent power of the mind. This is evident from the paſſage quoted from the writings of St. Paul, in which conſcience is ſaid to be the witneſs that accuſes, or excuſes us, of a breach of the law written in our hearts. The moral faculty is what the ſchoolmen call the " regula re-
" gulans,"—the conſcience is their " regula
" regulata." Or, to ſpeak in more modern terms, the moral faculty performs the office of a law-giver, while the buſineſs of conſcience is to perform the duty of a judge. The moral faculty is to the conſcience, what taſte is to the judgment, and ſenſation to perception. It is quick in its operations, and like the ſenſitive plant, acts without reflection, while conſcience follows with deliberate ſteps, and meaſures all her actions, by the unerring ſquare of right and wrong. The moral faculty exerciſes itſelf upon the

† Oratio pro Milone.

actions of others. It approves even in books, of the virtues of a Trajan, and diſapproves of the vices of a Marius, while conſcience confines its operations, only to its own actions. Theſe two powers of the mind are generally in an exact ratio to each other, but they ſometimes exiſt in different degrees in the ſame perſon. Hence we often find conſcience in its full vigor, with a diminiſhed tone, or total abſence of the moral faculty.

It has long been a queſtion among metaphyſicians, whether the conſcience be ſeated in the will or in the underſtanding. The controverſy can only be ſettled by admitting the will to be the ſeat of the moral faculty, and the underſtanding to be the ſeat of the conſcience. The myſterious nature of the union of thoſe two moral principles with the will and underſtanding, is a ſubject foreign to the buſineſs of the preſent enquiry.——

As I conſider virtue and vice to conſiſt in *action*, and not in opinion, and as this action has its ſeat in the *will*, and not in the conſcience, I ſhall confine my enquiries chiefly to the influence of phyſical cauſes upon that moral power of the mind, which is connected with volition, although many of theſe cauſes act likewiſe upon the conſcience, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter.——The ſtate of the moral faculty is viſible in actions, which affect the well-being of ſociety. The ſtate of the conſcience is inviſible, and therefore removed beyond our inveſtigation.

The moral faculty has received different names from different authors. It is the "moral ſenſe" of Dr. Hutchiſon——the "ſympathy" of Dr. Adam Smith——the "moral inſtinct" of Rouſſeau——and "the "light that lighteth every man that cometh "into the world" of St. John. I have adopted the term of moral faculty from Dr. Beattie, becauſe I conceive it conveys with

the moſt perſpicuity, the idea of a power in the mind, of chuſing good and evil.

OUR books of medicine contain many records of the effects of phyſical cauſes upon the memory — the imagination — and the judgment. In ſome inſtances we behold their operation only on one,—in others on two,—and in many caſes upon the whole of theſe faculties. Their derangement has received different names, according to the number or nature of the faculties that are affected. The loſs of memory has been called "amneſia"—falſe judgment upon one ſubject has been called "melancholia"—falſe judgment upon all ſubjects has been called "mania"—and a defect of all the three intellectual faculties that have been mentioned, has received the name of "amen-"tia." Perſons who labour under the derangement, or want of theſe powers of the mind, are conſidered, very properly, as ſubjects of medicine; and there are many caſes upon record that prove, that their diſeaſes have yielded to the healing art.

In order to illuſtrate the effects of phyſical cauſes upon the moral faculty, it will be neceſſary *firſt* to ſhew their effects upon the memory — the imagination — and the judgment; and at the ſame time to point out the analogy between their operation upon the intellectual powers of the mind, and the moral faculty.

1. Do we obſerve a connection between the intellectual powers, and the degrees of conſiſtency and firmneſs of the brain in infancy and childhood? ——The ſame connection has been obſerved between the ſtrength as well as the progreſs of the moral faculty in children.

2. Do we obſerve a certain ſize of the brain, and a peculiar caſt of features, ſuch as the prominent eye, and the aquiline noſe, to be connected with extraordinary portions of genius?—We obſerve a ſimilar connection between the figure and temperament of the body, and certain moral faculties. ——Hence we often aſcribe good temper

and benevolence to corpulency, and irascibility to sanguineous habits. Cæsar thought himself safe in the friendship of the "sleek-headed" Anthony and Dolabella, but was afraid to trust to the professions of the slender Cassius.

3. Do we observe certain degrees of the intellectual faculties to be hereditary in certain families? The same observation has been frequently extended to moral qualities ——Hence we often find certain virtues and vices as peculiar to families, through all their degrees of consanguinity, and duration, as a peculiarity of voice — complexion — or shape.

4. Do we observe instances of a total want of memory—imagination—and judgment, either from an original defect in the stamina of the brain, or from the influence of physical causes?——The same unnatural defect is sometimes observed, and probably from the same causes, of a moral faculty. The celebrated Servin, whose character is

drawn

drawn by the Duke of Sully in his Memoirs, appears to be an inſtance of the total abſence of the moral faculty, while the chaſm, produced by this defect, ſeems to have been filled up by a more than common extenſion of every other power of his mind. I beg leave to repeat the hiſtory of this prodigy of vice and knowledge.——"

"Let the reader repreſent to himſelf a man "of a genius ſo lively, and of an under- "ſtanding ſo extenſive, as rendered him "ſcarce ignorant of any thing that could "be known—of ſo vaſt and ready a com- "prehenſion, that he immediately made "himſelf maſter of whatever he attempted "—and of ſo prodigious a memory, that "he never forgot what he once learned. "He poſſeſſed all parts of philoſophy, and "the mathematics, particularly fortification "and drawing. Even in theology he was "ſo well ſkilled, that he was an excellent "preacher, whenever he had a mind to ex- "ert that talent, and an able diſputant, for "and againſt the reformed religion indiffe- "rently. He not only underſtood Greek—

"Hebrew

" Hebrew—and all the languages which we
" call learned, but alſo all the different jar-
" gons, or modern dialects. He accented
" and pronounced them ſo naturally, and
" ſo perfectly imitated the geſtures and
" manners both of the ſeveral nations of
" Europe, and the particular provinces of
" France, that he might have been taken
" for a native of all, or of any of theſe
" countries: and this quality he applied to
" counterfeit all ſorts of perſons, wherein
" he ſucceeded wonderfully. He was more-
" over the beſt comedian, and the greateſt
" droll that perhaps ever appeared. He
" had a genius for poetry, and had wrote
" many verſes. He played upon almoſt all
" inſtruments—was a perfect maſter of mu-
" ſic—and ſung moſt agreeably and juſtly.
" He likewiſe could ſay maſs, for he was of
" a diſpoſition to do, as well as to know,
" all things. His body was perfectly well
" ſuited to his mind. He was light, nim-
" ble, and dexterous, and fit for all exer-
" ciſes. He could ride well, and in danc-
" ing, wreſtling, and leaping, he was ad-
" mired,

" mired. There are not any recreative
" games that he did not know, and he was
" ſkilled in almoſt all mechanic arts.——
" But now for the reverſe of the medal.
" Here it appeared, that he was treacherous
" —cruel—cowardly—deceitful—a liar—
" a cheat—a drunkard and a glutton—a
" ſharper in play—immerſed in every ſpe-
" cies of vice—a blaſphemer—an atheiſt.
" ——In a word—in him might be found
" all the vices that are contrary to nature
" —honour—religion—and ſociety,——the
" truth of which he himſelf evinced with
" his lateſt breath; for he died in the flow-
" er of his age, in a common brothel, per-
" fectly corrupted by his debaucheries, and
" expired with the glaſs in his hand, curſ-
" ing, and denying God *."

It was probably a ſtate of the human mind ſuch as has been deſcribed, that our Saviour alluded to in the diſciple, who was about to betray him, when he called

* Vol. III. p. 216. 217.

him

him "a devil." Perhaps the eſſence of depravity in infernal ſpirits, conſiſts in their being wholly devoid of a moral faculty. In them the will has probably loſt the power of chuſing *, as well as the capacity of enjoying moral good. It is true, we read of their trembling in a belief of the exiſtence of a God, and of their anticipating future puniſhment by aſking, whether they were to be tormented before their time: But this is the effect of conſcience, and hence ariſes another argument in favor of this judicial power of the mind, being diſtinct from the moral faculty. It would ſeem as if the Supreme Being had preſerved the moral faculty in man from the ruins of his fall, on purpoſe to guide him back again to Paradiſe, and at the ſame time had conſtituted the conſcience, both in men and in fallen ſpi-

* Milton ſeems to have been of this opinion. Hence, after aſcribing repentance to Satan, he makes him declare,

"Farewell remorſe: all good to me is loſt,
"*Evil*, be thou my *good*."——————
PARADISE LOST, Book IV.

rits, a kind of royalty in his moral empire, on purpoſe to ſhew his property in all intelligent creatures, and their original reſemblance to himſelf. Perhaps the eſſence of moral depravity in man conſiſts in a total, but temporary ſuſpenſion of the power of conſcience. Perſons in this ſituation are emphatically ſaid in the ſcriptures to be "paſt feeling"——and to have their conſciences ſeared, with a "hot iron"——they are likewiſe ſaid to be "twice dead"——that is, the ſame torpor or moral inſenſibility, has ſeized both the moral faculty and the conſcience.

5. Do we ever obſerve inſtances of the exiſtence of only *one* of the three intellectual powers of the mind that have been named, in the abſence of the other two? We obſerve ſomething of the ſame kind with reſpect to the moral faculty. I once knew a man, who diſcovered no one mark of reaſon, who poſſeſſed the moral ſenſe or faculty in ſo high a degree, that he ſpent his whole life in acts of benevolence. He was not only

inoffenſive,

inoffenſive, (which is not always the caſe with idiots) but he was kind, and affectionate to every body. He had no ideas of time, but what were ſuggeſted to him by the returns of the ſtated periods for public worſhip, in which he appeared to take great delight. He ſpent ſeveral hours of every day in devotion, in which he was ſo careful to be private, that he was once found in the moſt improbable place in the world for that purpoſe, viz. in an oven.

6. Do we obſerve the memory, the imagination and the judgment, to be affected by diſeaſes, particularly by fevers, and madneſs? Where is the phyſician, who has not ſeen the moral faculty affected from the ſame cauſes! How often do we ſee the temper wholly changed by a fit of ſickneſs! And how often do we hear perſons of the moſt delicate virtue, utter ſpeeches in the delirium of a fever, that are offenſive to decency, or good manners! I have heard a well-atteſted hiſtory of a clergyman of the moſt exemplary moral character, who

ſpent

ſpent the laſt moments of a fever which deprived him both of his reaſon and his life, in profane curſing and ſwearing. I once attended a young woman in a nervous fever, who diſcovered after her recovery, a loſs of her former habit of veracity. Her memory (a defect of which, might be ſuſpected of being the cauſe of this vice) was in every reſpect as perfect as it was before the attack of the fever *. The inſtances of immorality in maniacs, who were formerly diſtinguiſhed for the oppoſite character, are ſo numerous, and well known, that it will not be neceſſary to ſelect any caſes, to eſtabliſh the truth of the propoſition contained under this head.

7. Do we obſerve any of the three intellectual powers that have been named, enlarged by diſeaſes? Patients in the deli-

* I have ſelected this caſe from many others, which have come under my notice, in which the moral faculty appeared to be impaired by diſeaſes, particularly by the typhus of Dr. Cullen, and by thoſe ſpecies of palſy which affect the brain.

rium

rium of a fever, often diſcover extraordinary flights of imagination, and madmen often aſtoniſh us with their wonderful acts of memory. The ſame enlargement, ſometimes, appears in the operations of the moral faculty. I have more than once heard the moſt ſublime diſcourſes on morality in the cell of an hoſpital, and who has not ſeen inſtances of patients in acute diſeaſes, diſcovering degrees of benevolence and integrity, that were not natural to them in the ordinary courſe of their lives?

8. Do we ever obſerve a partial inſanity, or falſe perception on one ſubject, while the judgment is ſound and correct, upon all others? We perceive, in ſome inſtances, a ſimilar defect in the moral faculty. There are perſons who are moral in the higheſt degree, as to certain duties, who nevertheleſs live under the influence of ſome one vice. I knew an inſtance of a woman, who was exemplary in her obedience to every command of the moral law, except one. She could not refrain from ſtealing. What made this vice

the

the more remarkable was, that ſhe was in eaſy circumſtances, and not addicted to extravagance in any thing. Such was her propenſity to this vice, that when ſhe could lay her hands upon nothing more valuable, ſhe would often, at the table of a friend, fill her pockets ſecretly with bread. As a proof that her judgment was not affected by this defect in her moral faculty, ſhe would both confeſs and lament her crime, when detected in it.

9. Do we obſerve the imagination in many inſtances to be affected with apprehenſions of dangers that have no exiſtence? In like manner we obſerve the moral faculty to diſcover a ſenſibility to vice, that is by no means proportioned to its degrees of depravity. How often do we ſee perſons labouring under this morbid ſenſibility of the moral faculty, refuſe to give a direct anſwer to a plain queſtion, that related perhaps only to the weather, or to the hour of the day, leſt they ſhould wound the peace of their minds by telling a falſehood!

10. Do dreams affect the memory—the imagination—and the judgment? Dreams are nothing but incoherent ideas, occaſioned by partial or imperfect ſleep. There is a variety in the ſuſpenſion of the powers of the mind in this ſtate of the ſyſtem. In ſome caſes the imagination only is deranged in dreams—in others the memory is affected ——and in others the judgment.——But there are caſes, in which the change that is produced in the ſtate of the brain, by means of ſleep, affects the moral faculty likewiſe; hence we ſometimes dream of doing and ſaying things when aſleep, which we ſhudder at, as ſoon as we awake. This ſuppoſed defection from virtue, exiſts frequently in dreams where the memory and judgment are ſcarcely impaired. It cannot therefore be aſcribed to the deſertion of thoſe two powers of the mind.

11. Do we read, in the accounts of travellers, of men, who in reſpect of intellectual capacity and enjoyments, are but a few degrees above brutes? We read likewiſe of a

ſimilar degradation of our ſpecies, in reſpect to moral capacity and feeling. Here it will be neceſſary to remark, that the low degrees of moral perception, that have been diſcovered in certain African and Ruſſian tribes of men, no more invalidate our propoſition of the univerſal and eſſential exiſtence of a moral faculty in the human mind, than the low ſtate of their intellects prove, that reaſon is not natural to man. Their perceptions of good and evil are in an exact proportion to their intellectual powers. But I will go further, and admit with Mr. Locke*, that ſome ſavage nations are totally devoid of the moral faculty, yet it will by no means follow, that this was the original conſtitution of their minds. The appetite for certain aliments is uniform among all mankind. Where is the nation and the individual, in their primitive ſtate of health, to whom bread is not agreeable? But if we ſhould find ſavages, or individuals, whoſe

* Eſſay concerning the Human Underſtanding, Book I. Chap. III.

ſtomachs have been ſo diſordered by intemperance, as to refuſe this ſimple and wholeſome article of diet, ſhall we aſſert, that this was the original conſtitution of their appetites?——By no means. As well might we aſſert, becauſe ſavages deſtroy their beauty by painting and cutting their faces, that the principles of taſte do not exiſt naturally in the human mind. It is with virtue as with fire. It exiſts in the mind, as fire does in certain bodies in a latent or quieſcent ſtate. As colliſion renders the one ſenſible, ſo education renders the other viſible. It would be as abſurd to maintain, becauſe olives become agreeable to many people from habit, that we have no natural appetites for any other kind of food, as to aſſert that any part of the human ſpecies exiſt without a moral principle, becauſe in ſome of them, it has wanted cauſes to excite it into action, or has been perverted by example. There are appetites that are wholly artificial. There are taſtes ſo entirely vitiated, as to perceive beauty in deformity. There are torpid and unnatural

paſſions.

paſſions. Why, under certain unfavorable circumſtances, may there not exiſt alſo a moral faculty, in a ſtate of ſleep, or ſubject to miſtakes?

The only apology I ſhall make, for preſuming to differ from that juſtly-celebrated oracle, who firſt unfolded to us a map of the intellectual world, ſhall be, that the eagle eye of genius often darts its views beyond the notice of facts, which are accommodated to the ſlender organs of perception of men, who poſſeſs no other talent, than that of obſervation.

It is not ſurpriſing, that Mr. Locke has confounded this moral principle with *reaſon*, or that Lord Shaftſbury has confounded it with *taſte*, ſince all three of theſe faculties agree in the objects of their approbation, notwithſtanding they exiſt in the mind independent of each other. The favorable influence which the progreſs of ſcience and taſte has had upon morals, can be aſcribed to nothing elſe, but to the perfect union that

ſubſiſts in nature between the dictates of reaſon—of taſte—and of the moral faculty. Why has the ſpirit of humanity made ſuch rapid progreſs for ſome years paſt in the courts of Europe? It is becauſe kings and their miniſters have been taught to *reaſon* upon philoſophical ſubjects.—Why have indecency and profanity been baniſhed from the ſtage in London and Paris? It is becauſe immorality is an offence againſt the highly-cultivated *taſte* of the French and Engliſh nations.

It muſt afford great pleaſure to the lovers of virtue, to behold the depth and extent of this moral principle in the human mind. Happily for the human race, the intimations of duty and the road to happineſs are not left to the ſlow operations or doubtful inductions of reaſon, nor to the precarious deciſions of taſte! Hence we often find the moral faculty in a ſtate of vigor, in perſons in whom reaſon and taſte exiſt in a weak, or in an uncultivated ſtate. It is worthy of notice likewiſe, that while *ſecond* thoughts

are beſt in matters of judgment, *firſt* thoughts are always to be preferred in matters that relate to morality. *Second* thoughts, in theſe caſes, are generally parlies between duty and corrupted inclinations. Hence Rouſſeau has juſtly ſaid that " a well-regu- " lated moral inſtinct is the ſureſt guide to " happineſs."

It muſt afford equal pleaſure to the lovers of virtue to behold, that our moral conduct and happineſs are not committed to the determination of a ſingle legiſlative power. ——The conſcience, like a wiſe and faithful legiſlative council, performs the office of a check upon the moral faculty, and thus prevents the fatal conſequences of immoral actions.

An objection, I foreſee, will ariſe to the doctrine of the influence of phyſical cauſes upon the moral faculty, from its being ſuppoſed to favor the opinion of the *materiality* of the ſoul. But I do not ſee that this doctrine obliges us to decide upon the queſ-

tion of the nature of the ſoul, any more than the facts which prove the influence of phyſical cauſes upon the memory—the imagination—or the judgment. I ſhall however remark upon this ſubject, that the writers in favor of the *immortality* of the ſoul have done that truth great injury, by connecting it neceſſarily with its *immateriality*. The immortality of the ſoul depends upon the *will* of the Deity, and not upon the ſuppoſed properties of ſpirit. Matter is in its own nature as immortal as ſpirit. It is reſolvable by heat and mixture into a variety of forms; but it requires the ſame Almighty hand to annihilate it, that it did to create it. I know of no arguments to prove the immortality of the ſoul, but ſuch as are derived from the chriſtian revelation *. It would be as reaſonable to aſſert, that the baſon of the ocean is immortal, from the greatneſs of its capacity to hold water; or that we are to live for ever in this world, becauſe we are afraid of dying, as to main-

* "Life and immortality *are* brought to light *only* through the goſpel."—2 Tim. I. 10.

tain the immortality of the ſoul, from the greatneſs of its capacity for knowledge and happineſs, or from its dread of annihiſation.

Nor let it be ſuppoſed, from any thing that has been ſaid, that I entertain an idea of the *neceſſary* influence of phyſical cauſes upon the freedom of the will. I believe in the preſcience of the Deity, becauſe I conceive this attribute to be inſeparable from his perfections; and I believe in the freedom of moral agency in man, becauſe I conceive it to be eſſential to his nature as a reſponſible being. In thoſe caſes where the moral faculty is deprived of its freedom, by involuntary diſeaſes, I conceive that man ceaſes as much to be a ſubject of moral government, as he does to be a ſubject of civil government, when he is deprived by involuntary diſeaſes, of the uſe of his reaſon.

I remarked in the beginning of this diſcourſe, that perſons who were deprived of the juſt exerciſe of memory—imagination—

or

or judgment, were proper ſubjects of medicine; and that there are many caſes upon record which prove, that the diſeaſes from the derangement of theſe faculties, have yielded to the healing art.

It is perhaps only becauſe the diſorders of the moral faculty, have not been traced to a connection with phyſical cauſes, that medical writers have neglected to give them a place in their ſyſtems of noſology, and that ſo few attempts have been hitherto made, to leſſen or remove them by phyſical as well as rational and moral remedies.

I shall not attempt to derive any ſupport to my opinions, from the analogy of the influence of phyſical cauſes upon the temper and conduct of brute animals. The facts which I ſhall produce in favor of the action of theſe cauſes upon morals in the human ſpecies, will, I hope, render unneceſſary the arguments that might be drawn from that quarter.

I am

I AM aware, that in venturing upon this ſubject, I ſtep upon untrodden ground.—— I feel as Æneas did, when he was about to enter the gates of Avernus, but without a Sibyl to inſtruct me in the myſteries that are before me. I foreſee, that men who have been educated in the mechanical habits of adopting popular or eſtabliſhed opinions, will revolt at the doctrine I am about to deliver—while men of ſenſe and genius will hear my propoſitions with candor, and if they do not adopt them, will commend that boldneſs of enquiry, that prompted me to broach them.

I SHALL begin with an attempt to ſupply the defects of noſological writers, by naming the partial or weakened action of the moral faculty, MICRONOMIA. The total abſence of this faculty, I ſhall call ANOMIA. By the law, referred to in theſe new genera of veſaniæ, I mean the law of nature written in the human heart, and which we formerly quoted from the writings of St. Paul.

In treating of the effects of phyſical cauſes upon the moral faculty, it might help to extend our ideas upon this ſubject, to reduce virtues and vices to certain ſpecies, and to point out the effects of particular cauſes, upon each particular ſpecies of virtue and vice; but this would lead us into a field too extenſive for the limits of the preſent enquiry. I ſhall only hint at a few caſes, and have no doubt but the ingenuity of my auditors will ſupply my ſilence, by applying the reſt.

It is immaterial, whether the phyſical cauſes that are to be enumerated, act upon the moral faculty through the medium of the ſenſes—the paſſions—the memory—or the imagination. Their influence is equally certain, whether they act as remote, pre-diſpoſing, or occaſional cauſes.

1. The effects of Climate upon the moral faculty claim our firſt attention. Not only individuals, but nations, derive a conſiderable

ſiderable part of their moral, as well as intellectual character, from the different portions they enjoy of the rays of the ſun. Iraſcibility — levity — timidity — and indolence, tempered with occaſional emotions of benevolence, are the moral qualities of the inhabitants of warm climates, while ſelfiſhneſs tempered with ſincerity and integrity, form the moral character of the inhabitants of cold countries. The ſtate of the weather, and the ſeaſons of the year alſo, have a viſible effect upon moral ſenſibility. The month of November, in Great Britain, rendered gloomy by conſtant fogs and rains, has been thought to favor the perpetration of the worſt ſpecies of murder, while the vernal ſun, in middle latitudes, has been as generally remarked for producing gentleneſs and benevolence.

2. The effects of Diet upon the moral faculty are more certain, though leſs attended to, than the effects of climate. "Fullneſs of bread," we are told, was one of the prediſpoſing cauſes of the vices of the

the cities of the plain. The faſts ſo often inculcated among the Jews, were intended to leſſen the incentives to vice; for pride—cruelty—and ſenſuality, are as much the natural conſequences of luxury, as apoplexies and palſies. But the *quality* as well as the quantity of aliment, has an influence upon morals; hence we find the moral diſeaſes that have been mentioned, are moſt frequently the offspring of animal food. The prophet Iſaiah ſeems to have been ſenſible of this, when he aſcribes ſuch ſalutary effects to a temperate and vegetable diet. "Butter and honey ſhall he eat," ſays he, "*that* he may know to refuſe the evil, "and to chuſe the good."——But we have many facts which prove the efficacy of a vegetable diet upon the paſſions. Dr. Arbuthnot aſſures us, that he cured ſeveral patients of iraſcible tempers, by nothing but a preſcription of this ſimple and temperate regimen.

3. THE effects of CERTAIN DRINKS upon the moral faculty are not leſs obſervable, than

than upon the intellectual powers of the mind. Fermented liquors of a good quality, and taken in a moderate quantity, are favorable to the virtues of candor, benevolence and generosity; but when they are taken in excess, or when they are of a bad quality, and drank even in a moderate quantity, they seldom fail of rousing every latent spark of vice into action. The last of these facts is so notorious, that when a man is observed to be ill-natured or quarrelsome in Portugal, after drinking, it is common in that country to say, that "he "has drank bad wine." While occasional fits of intoxication produce ill temper in many people, habitual drunkenness (which is generally produced by distilled spirits) never fails to eradicate veracity and integrity from the human mind. Perhaps this may be the reason why the Spaniards, in ancient times, never admitted a man's evidence in a court of justice, who had been convicted of drunkenness.—— Water is the universal sedative of turbulent passions—it not only promotes a general equanimity of temper,

but

but it compoſes anger. I have heard ſeveral well-atteſted caſes, of a draught of cold water having ſuddenly compoſed this violent paſſion, after the uſual remedies of reaſon had been applied to no purpoſe.

4. EXTREME HUNGER produces the moſt unfriendly effects upon moral ſenſibility. It it immaterial, whether it acts by inducing a relaxation of the ſolids, or an acrimony of the fluids, or by the combined operation of both thoſe phyſical cauſes. The Indians in this country whet their appetites for that ſavage ſpecies of war, which is peculiar to them, by the ſtimulus of hunger; hence, we are told, they always return meagre and emaciated from their military excurſions. In civilized life we often behold this ſenſation an overbalance for the reſtraints of moral feeling; and perhaps this may be the reaſon, why poverty, which is the moſt frequent parent of hunger, diſpoſes ſo generally to theft; for the character of hunger is taken from that vice——It belongs to it " to break through

" ſtone

" ſtone walls." So much does this ſenſation predominate over reaſon and moral feeling, that Cardinal De Retz ſuggeſts to politicians, never to riſk a motion in a popular aſſembly, however wiſe or juſt it may be, immediately before dinner.—— That temper muſt be uncommonly guarded, which is not diſturbed by long abſtinence from food. One of the worthieſt men I ever knew, who made his breakfaſt his principal meal, was peeviſh and diſagreeable to his friends and family, from the time he left his bed, till he ſat down to his morning repaſt, after which, chearfulneſs ſparkled in his countenance, and he became the delight of all around him.

5. I HINTED formerly, in proving the analogy between the effects of DISEASES upon the intellects, and upon the moral faculty, that the latter was frequently impaired by fevers and madneſs. I beg leave to add further upon this head, that not only fevers and madneſs, but the hyſteria and hypochondriaſis, as well as all thoſe ſtates

of the body, whether idiopathic or ſymptomatic, which are accompanied with preternatural irritability — ſenſibility — torpor — ſtupor—or mobility of the nervous ſyſtem, diſpoſe to vice, either of the body or of the mind. It is in vain to attack theſe vices with lectures upon morality. They are only to be cured by medicine,—particularly by exerciſe,—the cold bath,—and by a cold or a warm atmoſphere. The young woman, whoſe caſe I mentioned formerly, that loſt her habit of veracity by a nervous fever, recovered this virtue, as ſoon as her ſyſtem recovered its natural tone, from the cold weather which happily ſucceeded her fever.

6. IDLENESS is the parent of every vice. It is mentioned in the old teſtament as another of the prediſpoſing cauſes of the vices of the cities of the plain. LABOR of all kinds, favors and facilitates the practice of virtue. The country life is a happy life; chiefly, becauſe its laborious employments are favourable to virtue, and unfriendly to vice. It is a common practice, I have been told,

told, for the planters in the Southern States, to conſign an houſe ſlave, who has become vicious from idleneſs, to the drudgery of the field, in order to reform him. The Bridewells and workhouſes of all civilized countries prove, that LABOR is not only a very ſevere, but the moſt benevolent of all puniſhments, in as much as it is one of the moſt ſuitable means of reformation. Mr. Howard tells us in his Hiſtory of Priſons, that in Holland it is a common ſaying, "Make men work, and you will make "them honeſt." And over the raſp and ſpin-houſe at Grœningen, this ſentiment is expreſſed (he tells us) by a happy motto—

"Vitiorum ſemina—otium—labore exhauriendum."

The effects of ſteady labor in early life, in creating virtuous habits, is ſtill more remarkable. The late Anthony Benezet of this city, whoſe benevolence was the ſentinel of the virtue, as well as of the happineſs of his country, made it a conſtant rule in binding out poor children, to avoid putting them into wealthy families, but always preferred maſters for them who worked

themſelves, and who obliged theſe children to work in their preſence. If the habits of virtue, contracted by means of this apprenticeſhip to labor, are purely mechanical, their effects are, nevertheleſs, the ſame upon the happineſs of ſociety, as if they flowed from principle. The mind, moreover, when preſerved by theſe means from weeds, becomes a more mellow ſoil afterwards, for moral and rational improvement.

7. THE effects of EXCESSIVE SLEEP are intimately connected with the effects of idleneſs, upon the moral faculty,—hence we find that moderate, and even ſcanty portions of ſleep, in every part of the world, have been found to be friendly, not only to health and long life, but in many inſtances to morality. The practice of the Monks, who often ſleep upon a floor, and who generally riſe with the ſun, for the ſake of mortifying their ſenſual appetites, is certainly founded in wiſdom, and has often produced the moſt ſalutary moral effects.

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8. THE effects of BODILY PAIN upon the moral, are not leſs remarkable than upon the intellectual powers of the mind. The late Dr. Gregory, of the univerſity of Edinburgh, uſed to tell his pupils, that he always found his perceptions quicker in a fit of the gout, than at any other time. The pangs which attend the diſſolution of the body, are often accompanied with conceptions and expreſſions upon the moſt ordinary ſubjects, that diſcover an uncommon elevation of the intellectual powers. The effects of bodily pain are exactly the ſame in rouſing and directing the moral faculty. Bodily pain, we find, was one of the remedies employed in the Old Teſtament, for extirpating vice and promoting virtue: and Mr. Howard tells us, that he ſaw it employed ſucceſsfully as a means of reformation, in one of the priſons which he viſited. If pain has a phyſical tendency to cure vice, I ſubmit it to the conſideration of parents and legiſlators, whether moderate degrees of corporal puniſhments, inflicted for a great length of time, would not be more medici-

nal in their effects, than the violent degrees of them, which are of ſhort duration.

9. Too much cannot be ſaid in favor of CLEANLINESS, as a phyſical mean of promoting virtue. The writings of Moſes have been called by military men, the beſt "orderly book" in the world. In every part of them we find cleanlineſs inculcated with as much zeal, as if it was part of the moral, inſtead of the levitical law. Now, it is well known, that the principal deſign of every precept and rite of the ceremonial parts of the Jewiſh religion, was to prevent vice, and to promote virtue. All writers upon the leproſy, take notice of its connection with a certain vice. To this diſeaſe groſs animal food, particularly ſwine's fleſh, and a dirty ſkin, have been thought to be prediſpoſing cauſes—hence the reaſon, probably, why pork was forbidden, and why ablutions of the body and limbs were ſo frequently inculcated by the Jewiſh law. Sir John Pringle's remarks, in his Oration upon Capt. Cook's Voyage, delivered before

fore the Royal Society in London, are very pertinent to this part of our ſubject.—— "Cleanlineſs (ſays he) is conducive to "health, but it is not ſo obvious, that it "alſo tends to good order and other vir-"tues. Such (meaning the ſhip's crew) as "were made more cleanly, became more "ſober,—more orderly,—and more atten-"tive to duty." The benefit to be derived by parents and ſchoolmaſters from attending to theſe facts, is too obvious to be mentioned.

10. I HOPE I ſhall be excuſed in placing SOLITUDE among the phyſical cauſes which influence the moral faculty, when I add, that I confine its effects to perſons who are irreclaimable by rational or moral remedies. Mr. Howard informs us, that the chaplain of the priſon at Liege in Germany aſſured him, "that the moſt refractory and turbu-"lent ſpirits, became tractable and ſub-"miſſive, by being cloſely confined for four "or five days."——In bodies that are predi-ſpoſed to vice, the ſtimulus of chearful,

but much more of profane ſociety and converſation, upon the animal ſpirits, becomes an exciting cauſe, and like the ſtroke of the flint upon the ſteel, renders the ſparks of vice both active and viſible. By removing men out of the reach of this exciting cauſe, they are often reformed, eſpecially if they are confined long enough to produce a ſufficient chaſm in their habits of vice. Where the benefit of reflection, and inſtruction from books, can be added to ſolitude and confinement, their good effects are ſtill more certain. To this philoſophers and poets in every age have aſſented, by deſcribing the life of a hermit as a life of paſſive virtue.

II. CONNECTED with ſolitude, as a mechanical means of promoting virtue, SILENCE deſerves to be mentioned in this place. The late Dr. Fothergill, in his plan of education for that benevolent inſtitution at Ackworth, which was the laſt care of his uſeful life, ſays every thing that can be ſaid in favor of this neceſſary

diſcipline, in the following words. "To "habituate children from their early in- "fancy, to ſilence and attention, is of the "greateſt advantage to them, not only as "a preparative to their advancement in a "religious life, but as the groundwork of a "well-cultivated underſtanding. To have "the active minds of children put under "a kind of reſtraint—to be accuſtomed to "turn their attention from external ob- "jects, and habituated to a degree of ab- "ſtracted quiet, is a matter of great con- "ſequence, and laſting benefit to them. "Although it cannot be ſuppoſed, that "young and active minds are always en- "gaged in ſilence as they ought to be, yet "to be accuſtomed thus to quietneſs, is "no ſmall point gained towards fixing a "habit of patience, and recollection, which "ſeldom forſakes thoſe who have been pro- "perly inſtructed in this entrance of the "ſchool of wiſdom, during the reſidue of "their days."

For the purpoſe of acquiring this branch of education, children cannot aſſociate too early, nor too often with their parents, or with their ſuperiors in age—rank—and wiſdom.

12. The effects of Music upon the moral faculty, have been felt and recorded in every country. Hence we are able to diſcover the virtues and vices of different nations, by their tunes, as certainly as by their laws. The effects of muſic, when ſimply mechanical, upon the paſſions, are powerful and extenſive. But it remains yet to determine the degrees of moral extaſy, that may be produced by an attack upon the ear, the reaſon, and the moral principle, at the ſame time, by the combined powers of muſic and eloquence.

13. The Eloquence of the Pulpit is nearly allied to muſic in its effects upon the moral faculty. It is true, there can be no permanent change in the temper, and moral conduct of a man, that is not derived from

from the underſtanding and the will; but we muſt remember, that theſe two powers of the mind are moſt aſſailable, when they are attacked through the avenue of the paſſions; and theſe, we know, when agitated by the powers of eloquence, exert a mechanical action upon every power of the ſoul. Hence we find in every age and country, where Chriſtianity has been propagated, the moſt accompliſhed orators have generally been the moſt ſucceſsful reformers of mankind. There muſt be a defect of eloquence in a preacher, who with the reſources for oratory, which are contained in the Old and New Teſtaments, does not produce in every man who hears him, at leaſt a temporary love of virtue. I grant that the eloquence of the pulpit alone, cannot change men into Chriſtians, but it certainly poſſeſſes the power of changing brutes into men. Could the eloquence of the ſtage be properly directed, it is impoſſible to conceive the extent of its mechanical effects upon morals. The language and imagery of a Shakeſpear, upon moral and religious ſubjects, poured upon

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the paſſions and the ſenſes, in all the beauty and variety of dramatic repreſentation!—— Who could reſiſt,—or deſcribe their effects?

14. Odors of various kinds have been obſerved to act in the moſt ſenſible manner upon the moral faculty. Brydone tells us, upon the authority of a celebrated philoſopher in Italy, that the peculiar wickedneſs of the people who live in the neighbourhood of Ætna and Veſuvius, is occaſioned chiefly by the ſmell of the ſulphur and of the hot exhalations which are conſtantly diſcharged from thoſe volcanos. Agreeable odors, ſeldom fail to inſpire ſerenity, and to compoſe the angry ſpirits—Hence the pleaſure, and one of the advantages of a flower garden. The ſmoke of tobacco is likewiſe of a ſedative nature, and tends not only to produce what is called a train in perception, but to huſh the agitated paſſions into ſilence and order.—Hence the propriety of connecting the pipe or ſegar and the bottle together, in public company.

15. It will be ſufficient only to mention Light, and Darkness; to ſuggeſt facts in favor of the influence of each of them upon moral ſenſibility. How often do the peeviſh complaints of the night in ſickneſs, give way to the compoſing rays of the light of the morning! Othello cannot murder Deſdemona by candle-light, and who has not felt the effects of a blazing fire, upon the gentle paſſions?

16. It is to be lamented, that no experiments have as yet been made, to determine the effects of all the different ſpecies of Airs, which chemiſtry has lately diſcovered, upon the moral faculty. I have authority, from actual experiments, only to declare, that dephlogisticated Air, when taken into the lungs, produces chearfulneſs—gentleneſs—and ſerenity of mind.

17. What ſhall we ſay of the effects of Medicines upon the moral faculty?—— That many ſubſtances in the materia medica act upon the intellects, is well known to phyſicians.

phyſicians. Why ſhould it be thought impoſſible for medicines, to act in like manner upon the moral faculty? May not the earth contain in its bowels, or upon its ſurface, antidotes?—But I will not blend facts with conjectures. Clouds and darkneſs ſtill hang upon this part of my ſubject.

Let it not be ſuſpected from any thing that I have delivered, that I ſuppoſe the influence of phyſical cauſes upon the moral faculty, renders the agency of divine influence unneceſſary to our moral happineſs. I only maintain, that the operations of the divine government are carried on in the moral, as in the natural world,—by the inſtrumentality of ſecond cauſes. I have only trodden in the footſteps of the inſpired writers; for moſt of the phyſical cauſes I have enumerated, are connected with moral precepts, or have been uſed as the means of reformation from vice, in the Old and New Teſtaments. To the caſes that have been mentioned I ſhall only add, that Nebuchadnezzar was cured of his pride, by means of

ſolitude and a vegetable diet.——Saul was cured of his evil ſpirit, by means of David's harp—and St. Paul expreſsly ſays, "I keep "my body under, and bring it into ſubjec- "tion, leſt that by any means, when I have "preached to others, I myſelf ſhould be a "caſt-away." But I will go one ſtep further, and add in favor of divine influence upon the moral principle, that in thoſe extraordinary caſes, where bad men are ſuddenly reformed, without the inſtrumentality of phyſical—moral—or rational cauſes, I believe that the organization of thoſe parts of the body, which form the link that binds it to the ſoul, undergoes a phyſical change*; and hence the expreſſion of a "new crea- "ture," which is made uſe of in the ſcriptures to denote this change, is proper in a literal,

* St. Paul was ſuddenly transformed from a perſecutor, into a man of a gentle and amiable ſpirit. The manner in which this change was effected upon his mind, he tells us in the following words——"Neither circumciſion "availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but the new "creature.—From henceforth let no man trouble me; "for I bear in *my body*, the *marks* of our Lord Jeſus." Galatians, VI. 15. 17.

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as well as a figurative ſenſe. It is probably the beginning of that perfect renovation of the human body, which is predicted by St. Paul in the following words—" For our " converſation is in heaven,—from whence " we look for the Saviour, who ſhall change " our VILE BODIES, that they may be " faſhioned according to his own glorious " body." I ſhall not pauſe to defend myſelf againſt the charge of enthuſiaſm in this place; for the age is at length arrived, ſo devoutly wiſhed for by Dr. Cheyne, in which men will not be deterred in their reſearches after truth, by the terror of odious or unpopular names.

I CANNOT help remarking under this head, that if the conditions of thoſe parts of the human body, which are connected with the ſoul, influence morals, the ſame reaſon may be given for a virtuous education, that has been admitted for teaching muſic and the pronunciation of foreign languages, in the early and yielding ſtate of thoſe organs, which form the voice and

ſpeech.

ſpeech. Such is the effect of a moral education, that we often ſee its fruits in the advanced ſtages of life, after the religious principles which were connected with it, have been renounced; juſt as we perceive the ſame care in a ſurgeon in his attendance upon his patients, after the ſympathy which firſt produced this care, has ceaſed to operate upon his mind.—The boaſted morality of the Deiſts, is I believe, in moſt caſes, the offſpring of habits, produced originally by the principles and precepts of Chriſtianity.—Hence appears the wiſdom of Solomon's advice—"Train up a child in the way he ſhould "go, and when he is old he will not"—I had almoſt ſaid,—he cannot "depart from it."

THUS have I enumerated the principal cauſes, which act mechanically upon morals. If, from the combined action of phyſical powers that are oppoſed to each other, the moral faculty ſhould become ſtationary, or if the virtue or vice produced by them, ſhould form a neutral quality, compoſed of both of them, I hope it will not call in

queſtion the truth of our general propoſitions. I have only mentioned the effects of phyſical cauſes in a ſimple ſtate.

It might help to enlarge our ideas upon this ſubject, to take notice of the influence of the different ſtages of ſociety—of agriculture, and commerce—of ſoil and ſituation—of the different degrees of cultivation of taſte, and of the intellectual powers—of the different forms of government—and laſtly of the different profeſſions and occupations of mankind, upon the moral faculty; but as theſe act indirectly only, and by the intervention of cauſes that are unconnected with matter, I conceive they are foreign to the buſineſs of the preſent enquiry. If they ſhould vary the action of the ſimple phyſical cauſes in any degree, I hope it will not call in queſtion the truth of our general propoſitions, any more than the compound action of phyſical powers, that are oppoſed to each other. There remain only a few more cauſes which are of a compound nature, but ſo nearly related to thoſe, which are purely mechanical,

that I ſhall beg leave to treſpaſs upon your patience, by giving them a place in my oration.

THE effects of IMITATION—HABIT—and ASSOCIATION upon morals, would furniſh ample matter for inveſtigation. Conſidering how much the ſhape, texture, and conditions of the human body, influence morals, I ſubmit it to the conſideration of the ingenious, whether in our endeavours to imitate moral examples, ſome advantage may not be derived, from our copying the features and external manners of the originals. What makes the ſucceſs of this experiment probable is, that we generally find men, whoſe faces reſemble each other, have the ſame manners and diſpoſitions. I infer the poſſibility of ſucceſs in an attempt to imitate originals in the manner that has been mentioned, from the facility with which domeſtics acquire a reſemblance to their maſters and miſtreſſes, not only in manners, but in countenance, in thoſe caſes where they are tied to them, by reſpect, and

affection.—Huſbands and wives alſo, where they poſſeſs the ſame ſpecies of face, under circumſtances of mutual attachment, often acquire a reſemblance to each other.

FROM the general deteſtation in which hypocriſy is held both by good and bad men, the mechanical effects of HABIT upon virtue, have not been ſufficiently explored. There are, I am perſuaded, many inſtances where virtues have been aſſumed by accident, or neceſſity, which have become real from habit, and afterwards derived their nouriſhment from the heart. Hence the propriety of Hamlet's advice to his mother———

" Aſſume a virtue, if you have it not,
" That monſter, cuſtom, who all ſenſe
" doth eat,
" Of habits evil, is angel, yet in this,
" That to the uſe of actions fair and good,
" He likewiſe gives a frock or livery,
" That aptly is put on—Refrain to-night,
" And that ſhall lend a kind of eaſineſs,
" To the next abſtinence; the next more
" eaſy,

" For

" For uſe can almoſt change the ſtamp of
" nature,
" And maſter even the devil, or throw
" him out,
" With wonderous potency."

THE influence of ASSOCIATION upon morals, opens an ample field for enquiry. It is from this principle, that we explain the reformation from theft and drunkenneſs in ſervants which we ſometimes ſee produced by a draught of ſpirits in which tartar emetic had been ſecretly diſſolved. The recollection of the pain and ſickneſs excited by the emetic, naturally aſſociates itſelf with the ſpirits, ſo as to render them both equally the objects of averſion. It is by calling in this principle only, that we can account for the conduct of Moſes, in grinding the golden calf into a powder, and afterwards diſſolving it (probably by means of hepar ſulphuris) in water, and compelling the children of Iſrael to drink of it, as a puniſhment for their idolatry. This mixture is bitter and nauſeating in the higheſt degree. An incli-

nation to idolatry, therefore, could not be felt, without being aſſociated with the remembrance of this diſagreeable mixture, and of courſe being rejected, with equal abhorrence. The benefit of corporal puniſhments, when they are of a ſhort duration, depends in part upon their being connected by time and place, with the crimes for which they are inflicted. Quick as the thunder follows the lightning, if it were poſſible, ſhould puniſhments follow crimes, and the advantage of aſſociation would be more certain, if the ſpot where they were committed, were made the theatre of their expiation. It is from the effects of this aſſociation, probably, that the change of place and company produced by exile and tranſportation, has ſo often reclaimed bad men, after moral—rational—and phyſical means of reformation had been uſed to no purpoſe.

As Sensibility is the avenue to the moral faculty, every thing which tends to diminiſh it, tends alſo, to injure morals.—— The Romans owed much of their corruption

to

to the ſights of the conteſts of their gladiators, and of criminals, with wild beaſts. For theſe reaſons, executions ſhould never be public. Indeed, I believe there are few public puniſhments of any kind, that do not harden the hearts of ſpectators, and thereby leſſen the natural horror which all crimes at firſt excite in the human mind.

CRUELTY to brute animals is another means of deſtroying moral ſenſibility. The ferocity of ſavages has been aſcribed in part to their peculiar mode of ſubſiſtence. Mr. Hogarth points out in his ingenious prints, the connection between cruelty to brute animals in youth, and murder in manhood. The Emperor Domitian prepared his mind by the amuſement of killing flies, for all thoſe bloody crimes which afterwards diſgraced his reign. I am ſo perfectly ſatisfied of the truth of a connection between morals, and humanity to brutes, that I ſhall find it difficult to reſtrain my idolatry for that legiſlature, that ſhall firſt eſtabliſh a

ſyſtem of laws, to defend them from outrage and oppreſſion.

In order to preſerve the vigor of the moral faculty, it is of the utmoſt conſequence to keep young people as ignorant as poſſible of thoſe crimes, that are generally thought moſt diſgraceful to human nature. Suicide, I believe, is often propagated by means of news-papers. For this reaſon, I ſhould be glad to ſee the proceedings of our courts kept from the public eye, when they expoſe, or puniſh monſtrous vices.

The laſt mechanical method of promoting morality that I ſhall mention, is to keep ſenſibility alive, by a familiarity with ſcenes of diſtreſs from poverty and diſeaſe. Compaſſion never awakens in the human boſom, without being accompanied with a train of ſiſter virtues—hence the wiſe man juſtly remarks, that "By the ſadneſs of the "countenance, the heart is made better."

A late French writer in his prediction

of

of events that are to happen in the year 4000, ſays " That mankind in that æra " ſhall be ſo far improved by religion and " government, that the ſick and the dy- " ing, ſhall no longer be thrown together " with the dead, into ſplendid houſes, but " ſhall be relieved and protected in a con- " nection with their families and ſociety." For the honor of humanity, an inſtitution* deſtined for that diſtant period, has lately been founded in this city, that ſhall perpetuate the year 1786 in the hiſtory of Pennſylvania. Here the feeling heart—the tearful eye—and the charitable hand, may always be connected together, and the flame of ſympathy, inſtead of being extinguiſhed in taxes, or expiring in a ſolitary blaze by a ſingle contribution, may be kept alive, by conſtant exerciſe. There is a neceſſary connection between animal ſympathy and good morals. The prieſt and the levite, in the New Teſtament, would probably have relieved the poor man who fell among thieves,

* A public diſpenſary.

had

had accident brought them near enough to examine his wounds. The unfortunate Mrs. Bellamy was reſcued from the dreadful purpoſe of drowning herſelf, by nothing but the diſtreſs of a child, rending the air with its cries for bread. It is probably owing in ſome meaſure to the connection between good morals and ſympathy, that the fair ſex in every age, and country, have been more diſtinguiſhed for virtue, than men—for how ſeldom do we hear of a woman, devoid of humanity?——

LASTLY, ATTRACTION, COMPOSITION, and DECOMPOSITION, belong to the paſſions as well as to matter. Vices of the ſame ſpecies attract each other with the moſt force—hence the bad conſequences of crouding young men (whoſe propenſities are generally the ſame) under one roof, in our modern plans of education. The effects of compoſition and decompoſition upon vices, appear in the meanneſs of the ſchool-boy, being often cured by the prodigality of a military life, and by the precipitation,

cipitation of avarice, which is often produced by ambition and love.

If phyſical cauſes influence morals in the manner we have deſcribed, may they not alſo influence religious principles and opinions?—I anſwer in the affirmative; and I have authority, from the records of phyſic, as well as from my own obſervations, to declare, that religious melancholy and madneſs, in all their variety of ſpecies, yield with more facility to medicine, than ſimply to polemical diſcourſes, or to caſuiſtical advice.—But this ſubject is foreign to the buſineſs of the preſent enquiry.

From a review of our ſubject, we are led to contemplate with admiration, the curious ſtructure of the human mind. How diſtinct are the number, and yet how united! How ſubordinate, and yet how coequal are all its powers! How wonderful is the action of the ſoul upon the body!—Of the body upon the ſoul!—And of the divine ſpirit upon

upon both! What a myſtery is the mind of man to itſelf! —— O! nature! —— Or to ſpeak more properly, —— O! THOU GOD OF NATURE! —— In vain do we attempt to ſcan THY immenſity, or to comprehend THY various modes of exiſtence, when a ſingle particle of light iſſued from THYSELF, and kindled into intelligence in the boſom of man, thus dazzles and confounds our underſtandings! ——————

THE extent of the moral powers and habits in man is unknown. It is not improbable, but the human mind contains principles of virtue, which have never yet been excited into action. We behold with ſurpriſe the verſatility of the human body, in the exploits of tumblers and ropedancers. Even the agility of a wild beaſt has been demonſtrated in a girl in France, and an amphibious nature has been diſcovered in the human ſpecies, in a young man in Spain. We liſten with aſtoniſhment to the accounts of the *memories* of Mithridates, Cyrus, and Servin.—We feel a veneration bordering

bordering upon divine homage, in contemplating the ſtupendous *underſtandings* of Lord Verulam and Sir Iſaac Newton; and our eyes grow dim, in attempting to purſue Shakeſpear and Milton in their immeaſurable flights of *imagination*.—And if the hiſtory of mankind does not furniſh ſimilar inſtances of the verſatility and perfection of our ſpecies in virtue, it is becauſe the moral faculty has been the ſubject of leſs culture and fewer experiments than the body, and the intellectual powers of the mind. From what has been ſaid, the reaſon of this is obvious. Hitherto the cultivation of the moral faculty has been the buſineſs of parents, ſchoolmaſters and divines *. But if

* The people commonly called Quakers and the Methodiſts, make uſe of the greateſt number of phyſical remedies in their religious and moral diſcipline, of any ſects of Chriſtians——and hence we find them every where diſtinguiſhed for their good morals. There are ſeveral excellent *phyſical* inſtitutions in other churches; and if they do not produce the ſame moral effects, that we obſerve from phyſical inſtitutions among thoſe two modern ſects, it muſt be aſcribed to their being more neglected by the members of thoſe churches.

the

the principles, we have laid down, be juſt, the improvement and extenſion of this principle ſhould be equally the buſineſs of the legiſlator—the natural philoſopher—and the phyſician; and a phyſical regimen ſhould as neceſſarily accompany a moral precept, as directions with reſpect to air—exerciſe—and diet, generally accompany preſcriptions for the conſumption, and the gout. To encourage us to undertake experiments for the improvement of morals, let us recollect the ſucceſs of philoſophy in leſſening the number, and mitigating the violence of incurable diſeaſes. The intermitting fever, which proved fatal to two of the monarchs of Britain, is now under abſolute ſubjection to medicine. Continual fevers are much leſs fatal than formerly. The ſmall-pox is diſarmed of its mortality by inoculation, and even the tetanus and the cancer have lately received a check in their ravages upon mankind. But medicine has done more—It has penetrated the deep and gloomy abyſs of death, and acquired freſh honors in his cold embraces.——Witneſs the many hundred

people,

people, who have lately been brought back to life, by the ſucceſsful efforts of the humane ſocieties, which are now eſtabliſhed in many parts of Europe, and in ſome parts of America. Should the ſame induſtry and ingenuity, which have produced theſe triumphs of medicine over diſeaſes and death, be applied to the moral ſcience, it is highly probable, that moſt of thoſe baneful vices, which deform the human breaſt and convulſe the nations of the earth, might be baniſhed from the world. I am not ſo ſanguine as to ſuppoſe, that it is poſſible for man to acquire ſo much perfection from ſcience, religion, liberty and good government, as to ceaſe to be mortal; but I am fully perſuaded, that from the combined action of cauſes, which operate at once upon the reaſon, the moral faculty, the paſſions, the ſenſes, the brain, the nerves, the blood and the heart, it is poſſible to produce ſuch a change in his moral character, as ſhall raiſe him to a reſemblance of angels—nay more, to the likeneſs of GOD himſelf.——The State of Pennſylvania ſtill deplores the loſs of a man,

man, in whom not only reaſon and revelation, but many of the phyſical cauſes that have been enumerated, concurred to produce ſuch attainments in moral excellency, as have ſeldom appeared in a human being. This amiable citizen, conſidered his fellow creature, man, as God's extract, from his own works; and whether this image of himſelf, was cut out from ebony or copper —whether he ſpoke his own, or a foreign language—or whether he worſhipped his Maker with ceremonies, or without them, he ſtill conſidered him as a brother, and equally the object of his benevolence. Poets and hiſtorians, who are to live hereafter, to you I commit his panegyric; and when you hear of a law for aboliſhing ſlavery in each of the American States, ſuch as was paſſed in Pennſylvania, in the year 1780—when you hear of the kings and queens of Europe, publiſhing edicts for aboliſhing the trade in human ſouls—and laſtly, when you hear of ſchools and churches, with all the arts of civilized life, being eſtabliſhed among the nations of Africa, then remember and re-

cord, that this revolution in favour of human happineſs, was the effect of the labors —the publications—the private letters—and the prayers of ANTHONY BENEZET.*——

* This worthy man was deſcended from an ancient and honourable family that flouriſhed in the court of Lewis the XIV. With liberal proſpects in life, he early devoted himſelf to teaching an Engliſh ſchool; in which, for induſtry, capacity, and attention to the morals and principles of the youth committed to his care, he was without an equal. He publiſhed many excellent tracts againſt the African trade, againſt war, and the uſe of ſpirituous liquors, and one in favor of civiliſing and chriſtianiſing the Indians. He wrote to the queen of Great Britain, and the queen of Portugal, to uſe their influence in their reſpective courts to aboliſh the African trade. He alſo wrote an affectionate letter to the king of Pruſſia, to diſſuade him from making war. The hiſtory of his life affords a remarkable inſtance how much it is poſſible for an individual to accompliſh in the world; and that the moſt humble ſtations do not preclude good men from the moſt extenſive uſefulneſs. He bequeathed his eſtate (after the death of his widow) to the ſupport of a ſchool for the education of negro children, which he had founded and taught for ſeveral years before he died. He departed this life in May 1784, in the 71ſt year of his age, in the meridian of his uſefulneſs, univerſally lamented by perſons of all ranks and denominations.

I RETURN from this digreſſion, to addreſs myſelf in a particular manner to you, VENERABLE SAGES, and FELLOW CITIZENS in the REPUBLIC of LETTERS.—The influence of philoſophy, we have been told, has already been felt in courts. To increaſe, and complete this influence, there is nothing more neceſſary, than for the numerous literary ſocieties in Europe and America, to add the SCIENCE of MORALS to their experiments and enquiries. The godlike ſcheme of Henry the IV. of France, and of the illuſtrious Queen Elizabeth of England, for eſtabliſhing a perpetual peace in Europe, may be accompliſhed without a ſyſtem of juriſprudence, by a confederation of learned men, and learned ſocieties. It is in their power, by multiplying the objects of human reaſon, to bring the monarchs and rulers of the world, under their ſubjection, and thereby to extirpate war—ſlavery—and capital puniſhments, from the liſt of human evils. Let it not be ſuſpected that I detract by this declaration, from the honor of the chriſtian religion. It is true—

Chriſtianity was propagated without the aid of human learning; but this was one of thoſe miracles, which was neceſſary to eſtabliſh it, and which, by repetition, would ceaſe to be a miracle. They miſrepreſent the chriſtian religion, who ſuppoſe it to be wholly an internal revelation, and addreſſed only to the moral powers of the mind. The truths of Chriſtianity afford the greateſt ſcope for the human underſtanding, and they will become intelligible to us, only in proportion as the human genius is ſtretched by means of philoſophy, to its utmoſt dimenſions. Errors may be oppoſed to errors; but truths, upon all ſubjects, mutually ſupport each other. And perhaps one reaſon, why ſome parts of the chriſtian revelation are ſtill involved in obſcurity, may be occaſioned by our imperfect knowledge of the phænomena, and laws of nature. The truths of philoſophy and chriſtianity, dwell alike in the mind of the Deity, and reaſon and religion are equally the offspring of his goodneſs. They muſt, therefore, ſtand and fall together. By reaſon, in the preſent in-

ſtance, I mean the power of judging of truth, as well as the power of comprehending it. Happy æra!—When the divine and the philoſopher ſhall embrace each other, and unite their labors, for the reformation and happineſs of mankind!——

ILLUSTRIOUS COUNCILLORS and SENATORS of Pennſylvania!* I anticipate your candid reception of this feeble effort to encreaſe the quantity of virtue in our republic. It is not my buſineſs to remind you of the immenſe reſources for greatneſs, which nature and Providence have beſtowed upon our ſtate. Every advantage which France has derived from being placed in the centre of Europe, and which Britain has derived from her mixture of nations, Pennſylvania has opened to her. But my buſineſs at

* His excellency the preſident, and ſupreme executive council, and the members of the general aſſembly of Pennſylvania, attended the delivery of the oration, in the hall of the univerſity, by invitation from the philoſophical ſociety.

preſent, is to ſuggeſt the means of promoting the happineſs, not the greatneſs of the ſtate. For this purpoſe, it is abſolutely neceſſary that our government, which unites into one all the minds of the ſtate, ſhould poſſeſs, in an eminent degree, not only the underſtanding, the paſſions, and the will, but above all, the moral faculty, and the conſcience of an individual.—Nothing can be politically right, that is morally wrong; and no neceſſity can ever ſanctify a law, that is contrary to equity. VIRTUE is the living principle of a republic. To promote this, laws for the ſuppreſſion of vice and immorality will be as ineffectual, as the encreaſe and enlargement of gaols.—There is but one method of preventing crimes, and of rendering a republican form of government durable, and that is by diſſeminating the ſeeds of virtue and knowledge through every part of the ſtate, by means of proper modes and places of education, and this can be done effectually only, by the interference and aid of the legiſlature. I am ſo

deeply

deeply impreſſed with the truth of this opinion, that were this evening to be the laſt of my life, I would not only ſay to the aſylum of my anceſtors, and my beloved native country, with the patriot of Venice, "Eſto perpetua"—But I would add, as the laſt proof of my affection for her, my parting advice to the guardians of her liberties, "To eſtabliſh and ſupport PUBLIC SCHOOLS "in every part of the ſtate."——But why, theſe unſeaſonable reflections?—The TIME is come—and the expectations of the friends of humanity are already fulfilled in Pennſylvania. Behold! in the firſt group of bleſſings, that are deſcending upon the ſtate, the hand of murder arreſted in our penal laws, and puniſhments converted into the means of reformation, and public happineſs. See factions ſickening, and dying, and ancient friends once more embracing each other! Behold the Suſquehannah—the Delaware—and the Skuilkill, about to mingle their waters together, in order to convey upon their waves to diſtant countries, the produce of the induſtry of our own, and

of

of our neighbouring ſtates. See! public faith eſtabliſhed,—the arts and ſciences revived, and flouriſhing,—and ſeminaries of learning planted and endowed in diſtant counties of the ſtate!——But whence, this ſudden tide of national proſperity?—In whoſe ſhape has heaven deſcended, and conveyed theſe bleſſings to our country?—— I am ſure I ſhall tranſlate the feelings of every grateful heart in this aſſembly when I anſwer; they are to be aſcribed chiefly to the abilities and influence of that MAN * whoſe mind like a mirror, has long reflected back upon the Deity a miniature picture of his own works, and who appears to have been lent to mortals, on purpoſe to render our globe, a more convenient and ſafe habitation for the children of men. —Rejoice Pennſylvania, for he is thine,— I retract the narrow joy——Exult human nature—for he is thine!

* Dr. Franklin.

THE END.